

US-PAKISTAN TRUST DEFICIT AND THE WAR ON TERROR

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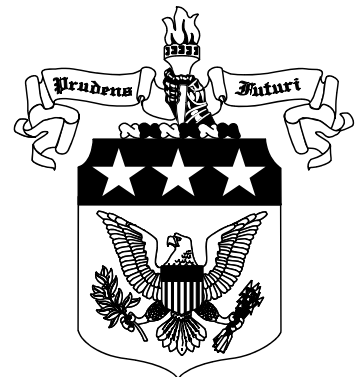
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USAWC CLASS OF 2008

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Report Documentation Page			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188		
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE 15 MAR 2008		2. REPORT TYPE Strategy Research Project		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2007 to 00-00-2008	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE US-Pakistan Trust Deficit and the War on Terror			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER		
			5b. GRANT NUMBER		
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER		
6. AUTHOR(S) Rizwan Akhtar			5d. PROJECT NUMBER		
			5e. TASK NUMBER		
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College ,122 Forbes Ave.,Carlisle,PA,17013-5220			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER		
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)		
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)		
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT See attached					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 34	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

US-PAKISTAN TRUST DEFICIT AND THE WAR ON TERROR

by

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Brigadier Rizwan Akhtar
TITLE: US-Pakistan Trust Deficit and the War on Terror
FORMAT: Strategy Research Project
DATE: 19 March 2008 WORD COUNT: 6,313 PAGES: 33
KEY TERMS: GWOT, Trust, Cooperation, New Political Realities
CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

The SRP will trace the history of US-Pakistan relations, focusing on present cooperation, its background, necessity and implications. Thereafter, the paper identifies the causes and scope of the current trust deficit and the implications for US-Pakistan's future relations, security and success in the Global War on Terror. The paper will conclude by proposing certain measures and recommendations for improving relations, and closing the perceived "trust gap."

US-PAKISTAN TRUST DEFICIT AND THE WAR ON TERROR

The relationship between Pakistan and United States has been and continues to be complex and varied.¹ Throughout Pakistan's brief history, the two countries have oscillated from an uneasy alignment, to nearly a complete detachment, to re-alignment, then to renewed sanctions, and now back to being allies.² During the periods of cooperation, both countries had compelling coincident interests and generally overlooked past or ongoing differences.³ The global war on terrorism (GWOT) has provided the most current opportunity for establishing a close and lasting US- Pakistan relationship. However, the war neither limits the relationship's scope nor necessarily overcomes the attendant bilateral challenges that could erode the relationship in the future.⁴ With Pakistan being an unwelcome addition to the nuclear regime, a crucial partner in the war on terrorism, and with a volatile political and social environment, the United States faces a broad range of foreign policy challenges when dealing with Pakistan.⁵ Moreover, U.S. policy choices toward Pakistan have to be integrated with broader regional policies as the relationships between the regional actors and the global role of South Asia undergoes rapid changes. Adding to this complexity is the friction caused by disagreements of the two allies on operational aspects of the conduct of the GWOT.⁶ For instance, Pakistan has repeatedly rejected requests by the US to allow its combat troops to operate in the tribal areas inside Pakistan or to allow US personnel to deal directly with local tribal leaders. This coupled with Pakistan's cautious and measured approach towards combating militancy, particularly in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), has been met with sharp criticism from many influential quarters within the US. Correspondingly,

certain elements in Pakistan – particularly those critical of the military, view the US as a “disloyal and inconsistent friend”⁷ which cannot be relied upon.⁸ As for the larger Pakistani population, they are also cautious about current US support.⁹ Notwithstanding the divergence of interests on several bilateral, regional and global interests, the GWOT provides a very real opportunity for establishing a strong and lasting strategic partnership between the US and Pakistan. Conversely, as with previous periods of engagement, the current relationship could also lead to immediate or latent problems, if not handled prudently, that may complicate regional security in the mid- to long- term. What the US and Pakistan, especially with the new government in power, decide to pursue, and how they do it, will likely have a profound impact on future stability of the region and overall strategic success of the GWOT.

This paper evaluates the current US-Pakistani relationship, examines and assesses the sources of friction and distrust between the two countries, and recommends specific measures both countries can take to solidify their relationship, provide for long-term regional stability, and make substantial progress in the GWOT.

Background

The US and Pakistan have been drawn together by coincident interests on three separate occasions. The first occurred during the height of the Cold War (from the mid-1950s to mid-1960s); the second was during the Afghan Jihad in the 1980s (again lasting about a decade); and the third engagement dates to September 11, 2001, and the subsequent war on terrorism. Since the event of 9/11, Pakistan has been a key ally in the Global War on Terrorism. Pakistan’s cooperation with the US in the Global War on Terror has increased the effectiveness of its operations against terrorism but also led

to severe consequences for the Government of Pakistan, the Pakistan Army and for the country's social fabric.¹⁰

The previously mentioned oscillating relationship between the US and Pakistan has left in its wake resentment and a sense of betrayal within Pakistan. Yet, US-Pakistan cooperation has served some important mutual interests in the past and is doing so to some extent again in the present. Historically, the issues marking the US-Pakistan relationship, whether they united or divided the two countries, have had regional and national impacts.¹¹ In developing a path towards a stronger bilateral relationship, it is useful to examine and assess the wide range of attendant and exigent issues influencing these two allies.

Pakistan-US Relations and Current Bilateral Issues

Following 9/11 and the United States request for assistance, Pakistan provided unprecedented levels of vital support to the US-led operations in Afghanistan.¹² However, even prior to 9/11, Pakistan had recognized the growing threat of extremism and had taken aggressive actions to curb this extremism and combat terrorism.¹³ Nevertheless, following the 9/11 event, Pakistan increased its operations and vowed to prevent terrorists from using its territory as a base of support for terrorism of any kind.¹⁴

Correspondingly, Pakistan was designated as a major Non-NATO United States ally in June 2004¹⁵ and most of the aid which was cut off in the 1990's was also restored.¹⁶ This resumption of aid and increased exports to the US helped Pakistan in their efforts to upgrade their military equipment and receive weapon systems previously purchased from the US but subsequently held back because of the reinstatement of the nuclear non-proliferation related sanctions. Likewise, in 2003, a US-Pakistan-

Afghanistan Tripartite Commission was established to bring together military commanders to discuss stability and related issues concerning the border regions of both the countries. The resultant security assistance programs were basically aimed to enhance Pakistan's counterterrorism and border security capabilities. The US also instituted a number of training programs for military and civil education in United States for Pakistan. Concurrently, the US provided Pakistan some modern equipment with 18 newly-built advanced F-16 combat aircraft (and an option for 18 more) along with their related munitions and equipment, Cobra Gunship Helicopters with spare parts, as well as other gear and equipment useful for the GWOT.¹⁷ Although, the equipment was both important and appreciated, many within Pakistan viewed the provision of the F-16s with great cynicism since the US was providing platforms that had already been ordered and paid for when the two countries were working together but were not delivered because the sanctions had subsequently been reinstated. Similarly, there has surfaced a diverse number of other strategic issues affecting US-Pakistani relationships.¹⁸

The issue of Abdul Qadeer Khan's nuclear proliferation network and Pakistan's nuclear transparency has been one of the main friction points of US-Pakistani bi-lateral relations. Following an internal Pakistani investigation by the National Accountability Bureau, and significantly prior to US political pressure,¹⁹ Abdul Qadeer Khan's network was identified, dismantled and he was brought to justice. Following his confession and subsequent pardon by the President, he was placed under house arrest and he remains confined to his house (his house being declared as a sub jail).²⁰ Due to his venerated status within Pakistan (he is literally considered a National hero by most of the country) and his expurgatory confession, Abdul Qadeer Khan received very lenient treatment.

Additionally, Pakistan continues to restrict direct access to both him and his laboratory. The leniency perceived to be shown to Abdul Qadeer Khan and the denial of access to his papers to allow the US to fully assess the impact of his transgressions continues to be an issue with US-Pakistani relations.²¹

The on-going dispute between India and Pakistan has also continued to be a source of both regional instability and international concern. On a positive note, the United States strongly encourages an ongoing Pakistan-India peace initiative. Additionally, several recent confidence building measures have eased tensions to a level that makes another war unlikely. The US's proactive mediation has helped diffuse the Kargil incident and the subsequent 2001/ 2002 mobilization of both countries that resulted in forces juxtaposed across the border on the verge of war.²² Pakistan, however, is concerned about the recent US-Indian nuclear agreement, and also aspires for one itself, and is willing to accept all the associated safeguards and inspections that follow.²³ How this will play out within the region and between the two nuclear-armed antagonists is still uncertain. What is certain is that US-Indian activities have a profound affect on the Pakistani populace and Pakistan's perceived security which can disrupt or derail an otherwise positive US-Pakistani relationship.

Pakistan geographical location as a crossroads within the region also provides some challenges. Pakistan is sometimes used as a transit country for opiates that are grown and processed in Afghanistan and distributed worldwide. The counter-drug campaign is both related to the war on terrorism and a separate and distinct problem for the consumers in the US and the west. Thus, Pakistani progress in controlling and eradicating drug production and trafficking becomes an area of US and international

concern. Pakistan has demonstrated its commitment by lending strong support to US State Department in its narcotics control efforts.²⁴ Also, Pakistan has almost eradicated opium cultivation within Pakistan; however, a spike in the opium production in Afghanistan has undermined much of this progress.²⁵ Most of these drugs find their way into western countries and the US, where it becomes a source of discord. Moreover, the drug money is being extensively used to buy weapons for terrorism and terror related activities.²⁶ The infiltration of the border areas by drug traffickers and corresponding economic influences in rural areas on the border and along the major trafficking routes have become a source of friction both within the country and between Pakistan and Afghanistan.²⁷ How the US and the west portray the problem and the corresponding rhetoric can serve to undermine US-Pakistani relations.²⁸

The development of democratic institutions within Pakistan has historically been one of the most important issues for the US and has often been linked rightly or wrongly with the reduction and control of extremism in Pakistan.²⁹ Unfortunately, the path towards democracy has been impeded by several recent events: the state of emergency declared by President Musharraf in November 2007; political instability created by the assassination of the leader of Pakistan Peoples Party Muhatarma Benazir Bhutto; and more recently by the situation created by the election results on 18th February 2008. How the winds of democracy shift within the volatile political context emerging in Pakistan; the actions of the current and newly elected leaders; the perceptions and activities of the major political factions within the populace; and the role of the military in establishing order or enforcing the will of the people will all significantly influence US-Pakistani relations.³⁰ Hopefully, the US response to recent political

challenges can be a guide for future responses. Although there was furor among the US Administration and the intelligentsia casting doubts on the Pakistani government and its ability to provide security to the political leaders within the country, the US-Pakistani relationship was not appreciably disrupted by the US Administration. Despite the strident rhetoric, the US remained generally supportive of the President's actions and his decision to hold the elections in February of 2008, which has resulted in a fair election and success of main political parties of 'Pakistan Peoples Party' and 'Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz).' Defeat of the religious parties in the recent elections is also a testimony of the people's desire to marginalize ethnicity and the militant version of Islam. How it impacts the US -Pakistan relations is yet to be determined. As Pakistan progresses towards democracy, the strategic environment holds both opportunities and risks. In large measure, the immediate actions of both the government of Pakistan and of the US regarding the march towards democracy will create the conditions for long term success or failure for US-Pakistan relations.³¹

Economic prosperity is the primary enabler of internal stability. United States by far is Pakistan's leading export market, especially for cotton, textiles and apparel, rice, and leather products. Direct foreign investment in Pakistan's economy has exceeded \$7 Billion for FY 07 of which about one-third of the volume came from US investors.³² Pakistan's challenge is to instill international confidence in the internal stability of the country to help foster increased foreign investment, curtail corruption and ensure transparency. In many respects, perceptions of stability are just as important as reality when influencing foreign investment. Thus, the impact of even minor variations in the

US-Pakistani relationship can shake or reinforce investor confidence and, as a second order effect, cause instability or improve prosperity and stability.

Potential “Wild Card” Influences

The above referenced bi-lateral influences can be aggravated by other “wild-card” events almost completely out of control of the major political actors. However, what is important is how the major players react to those incidents.

For instance, the incident of desecration of the Holy Quran in April/ May 2005 at Guantanamo created a strong sentiment against the US in almost all the Muslim countries. In Pakistan numerous protests were staged to show the public distaste and anger over the issue. Although Newsweek later retracted its story, the damage had already been done. In parts of Waziristan and the North West Frontier Province and certain other portions of the country, angers soared high and it all turned against the Musharraf Government and the Pakistan Army for their association and apparent support of the US.³³ This single incident left cleavages in the relationships between the Pakistani Army and the tribals and also between the general Pakistani masses and the US.

Similarly, the publication of Cartoons by “Jyllands-Posten” about the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) in a Danish Newspaper in September 2005, initially had little impact since the cartoon was not widely published and was unavailable to most countries. However, when Denmark published the same cartoons for the second time in January 2006, actually leading to printing of the same in France, Germany, Italy and Spain in February 2006, it sparked a violent protest in Pakistan including in the North West Frontier Province and Waziristan Agencies.³⁴ Muslims

probably expected a higher level of cultural and religious sensitivity from the Europeans and the United States. However, when the Danish Premier thanked European leaders and US President George W Bush for their support and solidarity with Denmark, Muslims all over the world erupted. In response, President Musharraf appealed to Western governments to condemn the drawings and recalled the Pakistani ambassador to Denmark. The protests in major Pakistani cities that erupted as part of the outrage caused some damage to western business concerns in the country. This cultural and religious insensitivity on part of the west, with the apparent acquiescence of the US, led to increased internal instability and provoked major portions of the population.

The constant barrage of accusations hurled against Pakistan from mainly Afghan leaders and certain Coalition Force (CF) participants that criticize Pakistani efforts to eliminate militant safe-havens and cross-border operations also does little to improve relationships. These accusations have become a constant irritant that also serves to erode US-Pakistani relationships at the highest diplomatic and military levels. Both the US and Pakistan need to better communicate and coordinate their respective strategies and avoid passing judgment on the efficacy of each. There also needs to be an increased recognition (and assigned culpability) for the many external influences undermining Pakistan operations within the Waziristan Agency including those emanating from Afghanistan. From the Pakistani perspective, building credibility and legitimacy within the closed and insulated tribal regions requires patience and time. Kinetic operations have their time and place but usually only reap strategic gains if conducted within the context of a larger social-political-cultural effort. Pakistan seeks to combine both short term measures to control the local security environment with a long

term approach focusing on developing lasting relationships with the fiercely independent tribal leaders. Only through these long-term relationships can Pakistan establish the conditions that will deny Taliban/Al Qaeda sanctuary and local support both now and into the distant future.³⁵ The Federally Administered Tribal Areas are a vast, remote, and rurally populated region. Finding and eradicating small pockets of radicals without the cooperation of the tribal's is like finding the proverbial needle in the haystack without help from the "straw".³⁶ The Pakistani government understands the importance of building close ties with the tribal chiefs (Maliks) for the long-term strategic success against the Al Qaeda/Taliban radicals. Conversely, the US interests focuses more on short term kinetic operations against the immediate threat seeking to prevent any and all cross border operations regardless of tribal sensitivities or perceived tribal sovereignty. While some of these operations achieve immediate local and tactical successes they oftentimes alienate the tribals and result in increased tribal support for the Taliban/Al Qaeda. Generally, the US has a short term perspective and seeks to achieve a quick victory so it can eventually finish their job in Afghanistan and withdraw. The difference in approaches and perspectives of both sides along the Afghan-Pakistani border remains a contentious issue that can disrupt long term US-Pakistani relationships.

The fog and friction inherent in war and military operations can also result in incidents with dramatic political fallout. In the month of February 2007 an incident took place at the operational level that had strategic effects. A US fighter aircraft dropped two bombs (GBUs 34 and 38) on the Zoi Narai Post along Pakistan-Afghan border killing one Frontier Corps Soldier and injuring many others. This incident had a very bad effect

on the soldiers deployed along the border as it instilled fear and anger for what appeared to be irresponsible targeting by Coalition Forces (CFs). The incident resulted in a joint inquiry with Brigadier Joseph L. Votel, DCG-O, CJTF-76 leading from the Coalition Forces/ISAF side and Brigadier Rizwan Akhtar, Commander 27 Brigade, from Pakistan Army. The conclusions of the inquiry were jointly presented at the General Headquarters to the Director of General Military Operations, Pakistan Army and Major General Hemley from the Office of the Defense Representative in Pakistan (ODRP).³⁷ The conclusions were different, though the recommendations were identical. However, what is of paramount importance is that these inevitable incidences be thoroughly and objectively investigated to the satisfaction of both parties and be accompanied by appropriate corrective action that is publicized so that there are no perceptions of favoritism or inequality in accountability.

How political agreements and bilateral engagements are described and couched within the rhetoric of politicians and national leaders and reported by the news media can cause significant misperceptions. For instance, it is routinely reported in the news media that the United States has given Pakistan more than \$10 billion in assistance, channeled primarily through the Pakistani military, and these reports add that Pakistan is not doing enough to control Taliban/Al Qaeda elements in FATA.³⁸ The general impression it gives to the Pakistani people and many international actors is that this is some sort of business transaction where Pakistan was hired to perform a job and is being paid. This perception marginalizes the coincident interests of both nations³⁹ in fighting the radical Taliban/Al Qaeda elements and also demeans the overall efforts of the Pakistan Army in the GWOT. Although the US and Pakistan share coincident

interests in the GWOT, there still remains a very real need for the US to employ soft power with Pakistan to positively influence the Pakistani populace. More deliberate and continuous efforts must be made to accentuate areas of cooperation and highlight operational successes. For instance, national leaders should respond to media criticism of Pakistani efforts in the GWOT by publicizing those areas of Pakistani cooperation such as: (1) the extension of basing and over-flight authority for US air assets during Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) / Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) when Iran had denied the US's request; (2) the granting of US ground troops access to a select number of Pakistani military bases; (3) the use of Pakistani forces for the force protection of US forces in country and for the security of US ships in the Indian Ocean; (4) the provision of Pakistani logistical support to the U.S. war effort, including vast amounts of fuel for coalition aircraft and port access for the delivery of vital supplies;⁴⁰ (5) the deployment of large numbers of Pakistani troops along the Western Borders and the utilization of Frontier Corps in operations against the radical Taliban/Al Qaeda elements for which it was not designed; and (6) allowing US access to Pakistani intelligence resources. Also correcting associated media distortions of the use of those funds could also dispel some misperceptions. For instance, of the \$10 Billion received, \$6.5 Billion was intended to reimburse Pakistan for the cost of the facilities US Forces are using. Three Billion dollars has been pledged (and not yet released) in accordance with the Camp David Accord, of which \$1.5 Billion is for military assistance and an economic stimulus package.⁴¹ A certain portion of these funds are intended for the Frontier Corps to enhance their capability to fight in the GWOT. Also, some funds have been targeted for humanitarian and infrastructure projects such as the digging of wells

and construction of roads, schools and medical care facilities within the FATA. The overall effect of these mis-statements by administration officials and politicians is to weaken US-Pakistan relations, damage the Pakistani government's image and reputation within its own populace, and foment hatred against the US and sympathy for the radicals.

Factors Shaping the Perceptions of the Pakistani Populace

A common Pakistani has always looked at the relations with the US as part of its overall security framework focused primarily on the perceived threat from a militarily stronger India.⁴² Following the partition, Pakistan's vulnerability to a potentially belligerent India provided the impetus to seek external security assistance from the US.⁴³ However, Pakistani security relationship with the US has been periodically shaken by US overtures to India and a perception that the US may be an unreliable ally should conflict between the two South Asian nations erupt.⁴⁴ Consequently, anti-Americanism within Pakistan has always been a complex dynamic⁴⁵ and is profoundly influenced by the brief history of US-Pakistan oscillating relations and the perception of the treatment of Muslims and Islam by the West.⁴⁶ Notwithstanding, the threat posed by India⁴⁷ has served as a primary enabler for US-Pakistani relations as US involvement and support can help mediate and ensure an equitable settlement of the Kashmir issue as well as help represent Pakistani interests within the United Nations.

By and large, Pakistan remained anti-Soviet (and by association pro-US) throughout much of the Cold War. This was brought to the fore following the USSR invasion of Afghanistan when public support turned even more towards the US as both countries supported covert and overt Taliban operations against Soviet forces in

Afghanistan. However, following the eventual defeat of the Soviets, subsequent US withdrawal from the region, and reinstatement of US nuclear non-proliferation sanctions against Pakistan, major portions of the Pakistani populace lost faith in the US and have remained skeptical of the US's reliability as a strategic partner ever since.

Additionally, even throughout the Cold War there existed major portions of the populace that aligned themselves opposite to that of the Pakistani central government and, within the Cold-war dichotomy, away from the US and towards the Soviet Union. This allowed the dissenting political parties to develop links with Moscow throughout the cold war era. During this period, the more the Pakistan central government was identified with Washington, the more these elements cultivated anti-US feelings. However, with the end of the Cold War, this anti-US dynamic was largely mitigated although there remains some residual Cold-War-based animosity within certain social/political quarters.⁴⁸

Another important dimension to these anti-US sentiments is rooted in the Islamist Framework.⁴⁹ There is a very real perception that the US actions against terrorist and terrorism is becoming increasingly religious-based with a growing focus against Islam in general. As one of the World's largest Islamic countries, Pakistan understandingly identifies and empathizes with the rest of the Muslims in the World.⁵⁰ This affiliation is entwined with both nationalism and even tribal identities. Thus, as an increasing number of conflicts portray Muslims as victims in one or the other part of the world, the Pakistani populace has grown suspicious of the US's implied or overt role, or lack of it, in these crises. The common perception is that certain 'Muslim' societies are currently under foreign occupation. Additionally, the United States seems to be fighting terrorism with

traditional instruments of power whose bluntness obscures the subtlety and complexity of the issues. The US's mostly unilateral use of force also depicts a "crusader-like" zeal that appears more like an ideological struggle in a clash of civilizations vice the purported securing of US security interests.⁵¹

Even where the US is not directly involved in these Islamic trouble spots it still assumes some culpability in the eyes of the populace. The perception with many in Pakistan is that as the World's sole super-power, the US bears de facto responsibility for many of the injustices inflicted on the international Muslim community because it uniquely possesses the apparent means to resolve or prevent them but chooses not to. Nonetheless, there is also a muted appreciation of what America has done for Pakistan, especially in the nation's early history when it was struggling for survival, and more recently because of the US's rapid humanitarian assistance to Pakistan following the devastating earthquake in 2005.⁵² Consequently, all the main political parties, including the Islamists, maintain an open, albeit suspicious, attitude towards the US and are generally prepared to work with it.

In the same way, Israel has become an object of Muslim hatred within Pakistan, as elsewhere, for its apparent persecution and punitive actions against the Palestinian nation.⁵³ Regardless of Israel's stated justifications, the repeated portrayal of Israeli Defense Force atrocities in the Arab media have, over time, solidified an anti-Israeli prejudice within the populace. Despite whether the US could actually curb or deter Israeli actions against the Palestinians and its other Arab neighbors, the US's overall support for Israel is viewed as an enabler of Israeli atrocities and social injustices and is also viewed as the guarantor of Israeli hegemony within the Middle East.⁵⁴ For instance,

the blockade in Gaza and related violence soon after the visit of President Bush from 9 to 11 January 2008, coupled with the fresh spate of apparently disproportionate responses to rocket fire that resulted in the deaths of large number of Muslims⁵⁵ reinforces these perceptions.

Finally, the US's establishment of additional restrictions for visiting the United States has caused some consternation and suspicions. Many Muslims perceive the United States is singling them out and closing its doors on them with some of the more heavy-handed visa policies of the Department of Homeland Security. This perception, when added to those outlined above, serves to paint a broader picture of US prejudice and discrimination against Muslims in general.

The Overall Trust Deficit

The history of US-Pakistani relations, a series of cascading “wild card” influences and other factors shaping the perceptions of the Pakistani populace have all served to create an overall US-Pakistan “trust deficit.”⁵⁶ There is a sense that the United States has abandoned many of its ideals and historic soft power approaches and that its foreign policy has shifted towards the use or threatened use of force to pursue its policy objectives.

As previously outlined for several related issues, significant damage to the US-Pakistan relations, and at times the GWOT, is caused by irresponsible and distorted press reporting and ill-informed political pundits. Of course within an increasing global free press, there will always be distortions caused by ignorance and special interests. However, the challenge for both the governments (Pakistan and the US) is to cultivate their relations with the press and take immediate measures to inform the “experts” and

dispel and discredit deliberate distortions when and where they occur. Understanding the issues, the social dynamics, culture, and perceptions of the “Pakistani People” is essential in understanding the impact of these distortions and formulating an appropriate response. Developing informed and coordinated responses by political leaders from both countries on exigent events and avoidance of distorted press reporting can help alleviate some of these negative consequences and help ameliorate some of the liabilities associated with a free press.⁵⁷

The Path Towards Bridging the Trust Gap

The current US engagement with Pakistan is primarily focused on the GWOT, with some mutual interest in meeting other strategic challenges such as: avoiding conflict with India and ensuring regional stability; stopping opium production and drug transit through Pakistan; security of nuclear weapons and continued non-proliferation; exploiting economic and strategic opportunities in South Asia; re-establishing democracy; and limiting anti-Americanism/ extremism in Pakistan.⁵⁸ It is through the recognition and strength of these primary mutual interests that must bridge the trust gap and move the countries towards closer relations. Each country should recognize that the mutual benefits accrued through a strengthened relationship is more important than any single point of contention and refrain from allowing any one area to irreparably damage the overall relationship. Nonetheless, critical U.S. and Pakistan policy choices in the region require an integrated approach to the issues as they are all inextricably linked. Success in bridging the trust gap will depend upon the coordinated actions of both the countries.

Pakistan Specific Measures

Pakistan needs to enhance its credibility by publicly identifying some of its critical strategic challenges. It must reform its governance, improve the economy, confront and eliminate Islamic extremism, and create a more tolerant society.⁵⁹ Most important, it must aggressively pursue rapprochement with India.⁶⁰

Pakistan must improve public services; eradicate corruption, end inequities among the provinces, and improve illiteracy rates. Good governance begins at the lowest level and extends upward to the National level. Better management of the relations between the central and provincial governments will stimulate the economies of both and help realize full economic potential.⁶¹

Political stability and internal order are complementary and are essential for attracting critically needed foreign investment for economic development. The ability to provide such security depends upon the integrity and effectiveness of Pakistan's political process. The mechanism for establishing the rule of law begins with a free political process but also extends to an effective and independent judicial system and a modern, well equipped professional police force. The role of the military should be limited to ensuring the Nation's security from external threats and in waging the war against terrorists and only be utilized for internal security as a last resort.⁶²

Pakistan should also provide greater transparency for its nuclear program. In this regard, it needs to take a more concerted effort to assure the United States and the world about the security of their nuclear weapons and facilities and the intentions of its nuclear program.

United States Specific Measures

The US-Pakistan alliance in fighting the Global War on Terrorism provides the immediate and compelling impetus for close relations. Continued US coordination and support in this area is essential. However, and as indicated above, there is a broad range of coincident interests that should also be exploited during this intense period of cooperation to provide a basis for establishing a long term and stable relationship. These measures could provide a more stable foundation that can be expanded to other areas of primary need within Pakistan such as developing closer economic ties, creating new educational opportunities, establishing closer cultural linkages, and developing a shared understanding of the each country's perspectives on terrorism, democracy, non-proliferation, and other regional issues. As indicated above, a key factor in current and future US-Pakistan relations is the US interactions with India and how they are couched within the regional and Indian-Pakistani contexts.⁶³

The resolution of the Kashmir issue and securing a lasting peace with India is vital to the stability of Pakistan and the region.⁶⁴ This could free up significant Pakistani military forces for potential employment in other troubled areas for operations against the Taliban/Al Qaeda. Also, an externally stable and secure Pakistan is more likely to focus on its economic well being and eventually serve as an example of a successful and democratic Islamic country both for the region and globally. More deliberate and energetic efforts by the US with both India and Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir issue and lay the groundwork for Indian-Pakistani rapprochement would dramatically improve the US-Pakistani relationship.⁶⁵

As the country continues to edge towards a stable democracy, the US can help by demonstrating both a better understanding of the socio-political currents within Pakistan

and the need for patience and tolerance. The United States must understand the requirement and dynamics of democracy in Pakistan and continue support of Pakistan and its new civilian Government with or without President Musharraf.⁶⁶ Applying diplomatic or covert pressure on any aspect of the new government formation can cause irreparable harm to the process and the bi-lateral relationship.⁶⁷

The US and, in particular, USAID should make a concerted effort to assist the implementation of educational reforms within Pakistan. This would include help in establishing sound educational policies, developing comprehensive strategic plans, teacher and administrator training, adult and youth literacy programs, and assistance in improving coordination and standardization between the public and private spheres.⁶⁸ An essential goal of the effort should be the improvement of educational facilities and associated programs within the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA); and to increase the number of Pakistani educators trained in the United States. However, the program should be aimed at improving education and literacy countrywide and emphasize local solutions for meeting educational requirements rather than imposing unworkable or culturally insensitive solutions with a centrally managed and administered program.

The United States needs to view their engagement with Pakistan in a holistic manner. Programs should focus on the populace in general and not just the central Government or be confined to assistance on GWOT. Broad-based programs focusing on improving security, prosperity, stability, education and infrastructure will raise the people's confidence in the country's relationship with the United States. A broad US focus would represent a long-term commitment to US-Pakistan relations and would

improve confidence and trust across all areas of engagement. The potential long-term benefits in other areas of mutual interest, such as for GWOT operations or for improved regional stability, could be profound.

Recognizing that many of the global problem areas and flash points involve Muslim factions, the United States must still be careful not to appear to be in conflict with Islam. The adopted terminology, corresponding political rhetoric, and diplomatic and military responses must be carefully crafted so as to avoid generic references to Islam. The US should also be careful not to reinforce the perception that the conflict is somehow a religious-based crusade of Christianity versus Islam. Likewise, when the opportunity arises, the US should make demonstrative efforts to support and praise Islamic socio-political advances and, where possible, make concessions when the negative political-economic consequences are relatively low.

The threatened use of sanctions against a trusted strategic partner obviously undermines the relationship.⁶⁹ Additionally, these threats directly convey a subordinate or submissive stature of Pakistan in the bilateral relationship and alienate the government and the populace.⁷⁰ Moreover, Pakistanis realize that US extended economic and political support is always subject to withdrawal and the potential of the imposition of sanctions is always considered by Pakistan before deciding on a policy option. Thus the use of these as “threats” has little impact on the behavior of Pakistan but have a profound impact on the public and the long term US-Pakistani relationship.⁷¹ First, the strength of the US-Pakistani relationship should preclude the US from considering these sanctions; second, policy decision that may result in the consideration of the imposition of these sanctions should be discussed freely between the two

countries before the decisions are made; finally, where Pakistan and the US believe that both their policy decisions are warranted, Pakistan should pursue their approach and the US should simply impose the sanctions without the attendant threats and fanfare.⁷²

As the global super-power, the US exercises influence over a wide range of global allies many of which have a vital interest in the stability of South Asia and the Middle East. The US should take deliberate steps to build a broader coalition of countries to support Pakistan's reform efforts, including soliciting highly visible donors such as Japan. A minimum level of security assistance should also be immune from any sanctions or consideration of use for political pressure by the United States. Economic prosperity and stability are two sides of the same coin. As the world's premier economic power, the US has the unique ability to help establish a vibrant Pakistani economy and increase employment. To this end, the bilateral investment agreement⁷³ (not yet concluded), between the two countries should be expedited. It will be seen by the international business community as an affirmation of Pakistan's economic stability, and thus raise investor confidence in the country. In the meantime, both the United States and Japan should provide greater market access for Pakistani textiles as an effective interim economic stimulus measure.

One of the most important aspects of United States assistance is in the area of energy. As a fossil fuel deficient country, Pakistan's expanding economy requires immediate assistance in the field of nuclear energy production. The energy demands are so great and potential benefit afforded by nuclear power generation so substantial that the United States can require, and Pakistan will agree, to just about any guaranteed access, inspections, or required security arrangements.

Conclusion

The relatively short history of US-Pakistani relations is fraught with strategic miscues. However, Pakistan's important role in the GWOT provides a unique opportunity for developing and maturing the US-Pakistan relationship for the long term benefit of both countries.⁷⁴ To enable this growth, both countries must become sensitized to each others social, political, economic, cultural, religious, and sectarian influences and undertake specific measures to cultivate areas of mutual interest while avoiding provocative actions and mitigating wild card events.

Along with the execution of the GWOT, the US and Pakistan share mutual interest in avoiding conflict with India and ensuring regional stability, stopping opium production and drug transit through Pakistan, ensuring the security of nuclear weapons and continued non-proliferation, exploiting economic and strategic opportunities in South Asia, re-establishing a stable democracy within Pakistan, and limiting anti-Americanism/extremism. With an informed understanding of the potential benefits in each of these areas, both countries can help build a long-term relationship largely immune to near term challenges and fluctuations, and thus provide a lasting bridge across the existing trust gap.

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